sions should be motivated to identify themselves with the protection and development of forests from which they derive benefits. A Wasteland Development programme has been launched to augment the production of biomass and relieve biotic pressures upon the forests.

Civil Supplies System in the country

95. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to improve and to have the best civil supplies system in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA): (a) and (b) For a good Civil Supplies System in a mixed economy like ours both public and private sectors have to play their roles, under a regime of regulations designed to secure optimal production of consumer goods and their equitable distribution. Public Distribution System (PDS) plays a crucial part to ensure a minimum availability of important essential commodities of daily use at reasonable prices to the public, particularly the vulnerable sections, and to influence market conditions including prices of these articles.

Steps are taken to improve the Public Distribution System on a continual basis. States and U.Ts have been advised from time to time to increase commodity coverage under the Public Distribution System; evolve an effective coordination among the various agencies involved; set up consumer advisory vigilance committees at various levels; improve the viability of the fair price shops and open new ones wherever necessary; introduce mobile shops for supply of essential commodities in remote areas etc. The States and U.T.s have also been advised to tighten the enforcement measures under the Essential Commodities Act and similar other legislations.

New initiatives for Ocean Development

96. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state: what are the details of the new initiatives and measures being considered by Government for Ocean Development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): The new initiatives and measures under consideration for ocean development activities include: (1) identification and formulation of research programmes to provide real time picture of the current and evolving state of the physico-chemical regimes of the ocean required for environmental protection and resource exploration, using space data and predictive models; (2) scientific experiments designed to provide clues to the process of global change and insights for making environmental impact assessments; (3) exploration of deep seabed mine site in the Central Indian Ocean using sophisticated techniques; (4) launching of research and development programmes to establish the techno-economic viability of deep seabed mining; (5) acceleration of specific programmes of economic importance such as harnessing of wave energy, exploration of living resources, drugs from the sea and protection of coastal and offshore environment; (6) acquisition and development of indigenous technology in instrumentation; (7) systematic monitoring and modelling of ocean pollution regimes and (8) development of data and knowledge base as well as skills for Island development.

Protection of environment and forests in the country

97. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state what steps are